
THE ATHENÆUM.

VOL. I.] YALE-COLLEGE, SATURDAY, FEB. 26, 1814. [N^o. 2.

Neque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere; nisi illi materia, occasio, fautor etiam, commendatorque contingat.
PLIN. EPIST.

THE VAGRANT.

No. II.

"These little things are great, to little man."

TRAV.

AS speculations on happiness, are among the most useful to which our minds can be directed, I shall offer to my readers, a few remarks on that subject.

The happiness of man, although it rests on some important circumstances as a foundation, is yet materially dependent on others, which, when separately considered, are of small consequence. It may be justly compared to a house, whose frame is composed of heavy timber, while its roof and sides, which alone make it comfortable, are formed of small, and apparently unimportant parts. Thus, happiness is essentially connected with health, a comfortable means of subsistence, and a clear conscience. But these cannot of themselves, make happiness, any more than the frame alone, can constitute a comfortable

tenement. There is an innumerable multitude of small objects, whose influence, either favourable or prejudicial, materially affects it. For the sake of illustration, I would call to mind the various combinations of forms that give pain to the eye, and the variety of shades and colours which yield it pleasure. The same is true of the other means of receiving pleasure, both of the body and of the mind.

These trifles may be classed under small external circumstances, and those inherent in our characters.

The pride of man may make him unwilling to own, that the enjoyments of any, except children and fools, can be much affected by small external circumstances. But, omitting their influence on the important foundations of happiness, I would ask, what are the feelings, even of a sensible man, when a change in the weather, has prevented a country excursion, from which he expected much pleasure? Few view such a thing without vexation; and none with indifference.

How many pleasant men are there, whose good humour would not be ruffled, by a short stay in a smoky house? How few, who would not feel some disquietude, even at the loss of a penknife?

They not only give pain, but are also able to enhance pleasure. A man in a pleasant neighbourhood, may have his enjoyments considerably increased, by the addition of a single pleasing quality, to a neighbour's character. He might receive pleasure, even from being able to add a single dish to his entertainment: or to pay one additional visit to his friend. An instance of the influence of a trifle in both ways, may be found in considering the different states of the mind, in clear, and in stormy weather. In a clear day, the warmth and brightness of the sun, and the beauty it diffuses over all the objects about us, serve to enliven the mind, and to render it better pleased with itself, and more disposed to receive pleasure from others. Reverse the state of the weather, and it is soon displeased with itself, often becomes gloomy, and sometimes even peevish.

The other class of circumstances mentioned, contains those which are attached to our own characters. They are those little accomplishments of life, which it is rather considered agreeable to possess, than faulty to want. I cannot shew their effect better, than by an example. Gulian was a naval officer of distinguished courage and skill; possessing, with a handsome person, an amiable disposition, and an excellent fund of good sense. On his return from a cruize, in which he had signalized himself, he was invited by an old acquaintance, who had been married in his absence, to his house; where he met a small, but agreeable party. In the course of the

evening, it was proposed to vary the amusements of the company, by dancing. The countenances of all brightened at the proposal; and every lady seemed flushed with the hope of dancing with the brave and handsome Gulian. He was necessary to form the set; and was destined by his friend to a most agreeable and beautiful partner. But in the midst of the preparation, he declared, with the utmost confusion, his inability to dance. Mortified beyond measure, he made a precipitate retreat; but did not escape the disappointed looks of the company. Had Gulian been told, that he would have felt so severe a mortification, from so slight a cause, he would have treated the idea, only with contempt. There are many such little accomplishments, whose value is often not duly appreciated, even by sensible men. When possessed, they are capable of adding to enjoyment, as much as they can impair it when wanted. Florio had a fine taste for music, which he had cultivated in his leisure hours, until he had become an admirable performer. In consequence of this accomplishment, he was invited to every considerable party, and welcomed with pleasure in every company.—He was thus made acquainted with a very agreeable circle, where his good sense acquired as much respect, as his happy talent gave pleasure.

Let me ask, if any philosopher has ever declared, that these things were capable of affecting our happiness, either one way or the other. Yet, these little accomplishments are able to alter very considerably, either by addition or subtraction, the number of our enjoyments. They are also useful in every class of society; their number being greater, as the society is more refined.

The disappointment, mortification or pleasure, which these little things, either inherent or external, produce, are, I allow, short. But they make up in number, what they want in duration. For these little disappointments, we seldom have any antidote ready: against great misfortunes, we have our pride, our desire of appearing magnanimous, our philosophy, or our religion to protect us. But trifles attack us unarmed: like insects in a summer's night, they sting us in spite of ourselves; and are the more vexatious, because their insignificance is known.

Having thus exposed some evils, which will, perhaps, be the oftener experienced, because they are known, I shall offer a few remarks, by an attention to which, they may be either diminished or removed.

As to the little disappointments in externals, we shall prevent their effect, in a great measure, by not being too much dependent on them; and by always having some subject for thought on hand, to which we may fly for refuge. Let our vessel be loaded with useful and valuable materials, and she will not feel the agitation of small waves. If, however, small vexations will come upon us, we must put them to ridicule, by comparing them with the great misfortunes daily experienced by those about us.

Those mortifications, which the want of some little ornamental parts in our own character may sometimes occasion, must be obviated, by removing the cause. They require no great efforts for their attainment; but are impressed on the most obdurate character, in the same manner, as the continued dropping wears the rock. They require no sacrifice of useful time: they are, in their na-

ture, amusements; and their acquisition may be a useful, as well as a pleasing employment of leisure.— They are, it is true, sometimes neglected by sensible men, because they are not in the first rank of importance: but, with the same propriety, that the treasurer of a great nation, neglects the tens and hundreds of his private property, because he is used to the thousands and millions of public money. They are valuable, by furnishing our leisure with agreeable business; and useful, by enabling us to display good sense and knowledge, in more extensive circles, and by ensuring them a favourable reception, by the influence of our own character.

O. S.

I mentioned in my last number, that Don Quixote always had his faithful squire, as a witness to his exploits. I did not anticipate then, that I should be so well provided for, in so short a time; but as a very honest fellow has offered his services, and seems willing to accompany me in my chivalrous expedition, I choose to accept him: at the same time promising my readers, that my squire shall never become loquacious, unless (as in the case of Don Quixote) they find the masterless entertaining than the man.

SIR VAGRANT,

I am at a loss for terms sufficiently courteous, in which to address your *worship*, on your determination, publicly announced, to enter on a course of adventures, for the laudable purpose of redressing the wrongs of injured innocence. But, relying on your candour, and that sound discretion, the marks of which, I discern in your first communication, I venture to accost you, though in homely

phrase. Humble as is my station in this literary commonwealth, and short as is the period, in which I have had the honour of being enrolled among its sons, many are the schemes which I have formed, to correct the errors, and chastise the follies, (pardon the presumption!) of my less thoughtful companions. But to me, an obscure individual, possessing no unusual share of native courage, so formidable have appeared the difficulties, attending every project of reform, that all my schemes, hitherto, have been suffered to evaporate in unavailing wishes.— Judge then, of my surprize and exultation, on taking up the first number of the Athenæum, to find a kindred spirit; to be apprised of the fact, that there is at least one other within these walls, whose mind is occupied with plans of reformation: and more, that there is one who dares undertake, even in this age of popularity, the ungrateful task, to stem the torrent of a wayward generation. Without circumlocution, therefore, I announce my purpose. I come to your aid.— Small as are my talents, they are at your service. You talk of the far-famed knight of La Mancha; and hint a parallel between him and your own valourous person. You need a Sancho. I offer myself as your squire. With united efforts, what wonders shall we atchieve! Already do I see those giants who infest our borders, and whose brazen fronts, defy opposition, laid low by your chivalrous arm.

You may expect from me, some account of my qualifications for the part I aspire to act. Here I shall be frank, that you may not be hereafter disappointed. My learning, as you might infer from my Collegiate standing, is limited to mere rudiments. But, though I cannot, like your book-

ish editors, quote Pliny; or, like your worship, quote Ovid; yet, as some compensation for this kind of ignorance, you may be assured, tho' I tell you myself, that I possess a tolerable share of mother wit. For one of my age, I have been a tolerable observer of men and things; have treasured up many sage maxims of experience; early knew on which side my bread was buttered; nor do I recollect the time, when I could not tell a hawk from a handsaw. There is nothing very peculiar, either in my phiz or demeanor: and I generally pass in a crowd, without much observation. There is, however, a certain sheepishness of look, which I am told I possess, and which by some is mistaken to indicate a want of decision, and an inattention to passing events.— But could those who entertain this opinion, once know how easily I can read them, from the beginning to the end of the chapter, they would be more cautious about coming within the reach of my eye. Often do I observe a *learned* senior, in passing, turn up his nose at me, as a raw freshman, whose skull I well know to be still more empty than my own. In short, I have a little common sense, a little shrewdness, and the whole spiced with a little self-complacency.

Should your worship conclude to accept of my proffered services, I shall fight by your side *pugnis et calcibus*. Not a student in College knows what I am doing; and you may rest assured, I can keep my own secret. My situation is favourable, for noticing the events of our community; I happen into many collegiate circles, and listen, without seeming to do it, to much of the conversation of the students: keep a private memorandum, and, if I receive your countenance and encourage-

ment, you will soon hear from me again.

Your most devoted,

RECENS.

MISERIES OF A COLLEGE LIFE.

1st. Getting up to prayers in a cold morning, and being detained so long by dressing yourself, as to get there just in time to meet the audience at the door, coming out.

*Jamque fere spatio extremo, fessique, sub ipsam,
Finem adventabat ———* Virg.

Which I translate :

Better late, than never.

2d. At an examination, to sit pretty near the beginning, and to have the questions put out regularly in the book, until you, by counting those before you, have marked out your sentence, (a thing which some hopeful scholars can do to a miracle, by dint of two or three years experience in the recitation room,) and found it quite easy. Whilst you are pleasing yourself with the thought of passing a clear examination, upon its coming to you, you are told to skip over twenty or thirty pages, to a place, about which you know as little, as you do of the man in the moon. After reading it over as slowly as possible, you are obliged to stop, and endeavour to make out the meaning. A dead silence ensues—every second seems an hour; until at last, you are obliged to give it up for a bad job, and to take your seat.

Conticere omnes, intentique ora tenebant.

Virg.

Or, *Obstupui steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.* id.

3d. Rooming with, or even near one who values himself upon his skill in playing the fiddle, or flute: or

rather, with one who cannot make out a single tune; but has so great a desire to learn, that he is charming you all the time, with crotchets, quavers, semibreves, &c.

*The man that hath not music in himself,
And is not moved by concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.*

Shakespeare.

4th. The pleasure of having a long string of nicknames, some of which are rather too appropriate, and to hear yourself greeted with some of them in a public street, or before strangers.

5th. Receiving a double letter from home, by the penny-post, which you think contains some money, which you have been long expecting.—Not a cent in your pocket. After some trouble, you are so happy as to borrow enough to pay postage; when lo! upon breaking it open, you find it is the first essay of a younger brother, together with one from your cousin.

----- *Jubeas renovare dolorem.*

----- *Quarque ipse miserrima vidi
Et quorum pars magna fui.*

Virg.

ON FASHION.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The following desultory observations on the Fashions, which have prevailed in different ages, may perhaps be acceptable to some of your fashionable readers.

From remote antiquity, the beard seems to have been highly valued.—It flourished most in England, in the century preceding the Norman conquest: but continued of a very respectable length, to the time of Elizabeth. It dwindled under the Stuart family, and finally went out of fashion, with the expulsion of James II. The last attempt that I recollect

to restore this venerable appendage of the human countenance to its ancient place, was made by the Spectator. His efforts were ineffectual; and we may now despair of seeing it again cultivated, at least in this light and froward generation. How much our morals have suffered, by this neglect of the beard, I shall not pretend to say. To causes less powerful and efficient, many a sage moralist has traced important evils. A worthy and wealthy gentleman, in the reign of Elizabeth, gave this reason for wearing the largest and longest beard of any Englishman of his time; namely, "that no act of his life might be unworthy the gravity of his appearance."

Whiskers, which are also of great antiquity, by some strange fatality, have survived the vicissitudes of fashion, and still hold their place; while the beard has been discarded. They too, set off some persons, it must be confessed, to great advantage; but from the characters of those who most frequently wear them, they impose but a feeble obligation on their subjects, to act worthy their appearance.

The Lacedemonian virgins, went abroad with their faces uncovered, while the married women, invariably appeared with their veils. And this was defended, on the very sound and justifiable principle, that the former wished to get husbands, and the latter to retain those they possessed.—On what principle, then, can the virgins of the present day, defend a practice diametrically opposite?—

With this example before them, I hope our modern "fair ones," will shortly abandon a custom so absurd, unreasonable, and above all, *inexpedient*.

In the reign of Elizabeth, the English cut the hair close, on the middle

of the head, and suffered it to grow on either side. We now pursue just the contrary course; and pride ourselves, in having it to grow, where they cut it. Which is the more beautiful, I shall leave to my fashionable readers to judge.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, many of the greatest Princes in Europe, wore wooden shoes. And in the reign of Richard II. the peaks, or toes of boots and shoes, were worn to so enormous a length, that they were tied to the knees. In the same reign, a law was made, to limit them to two inches. Most of my readers will recollect the time, when the peaks of their own shoes, were not much under the legal length. At the present period, we have run into the more comfortable extreme, of having the peaks of shoes, to suit the end of the foot.

In the reign of Henry VIII. Ann Bolen, we are informed, wore yellow mourning, for Catharine, of Arragon.

Of the reign of James I. I know but little. And indeed, from the observation of a very grave historian, it should seem, that dress was but little attended to at this time. "The ladies, (says he,) like those of Spain, were banished from court during the reign of James I.; which, perhaps, was the reason why dress underwent so little alteration, during that period."

In the time of Charles I. we find the ladies went with their breasts and arms exposed: those parts which they had covered very closely, in the reign of Elizabeth.

In the beginning of the last century, we find the Spectator complaining in severe terms, of the ladies' head-dresses. Within his own recollection, he declares, they had fluctuated within thirty degrees, at least.—

At one time they were so low, as to be scarcely visible ; and at another, towering so high, that he felt himself insulted, by being overtopped by every lady whom he met. It is natural to run from one extreme to the other. The ladies having first equipped their heads, turned their attention next, to the other extremity. Or, according to the Spectator, having first decorated their lower parts, their head was the next object of study. "Our female projectors, (says Addison,) were all last summer, so taken up with the improvement of their petticoats, that they had no time to attend to any thing else : but having at length sufficiently adorned their lower parts, they now begin to turn their thoughts upon the other extremity : as well remembering the old kitchen proverb, that if you light your fire at both ends, the middle will shift for itself."

I shall conclude these loose tho'ts, with the description of a *beau*, as he appeared in the fourteenth century.—One who was at the very top of the mode at this period, wore long pointed shoes, fastened to his knees by gold or silver chains; hose of one colour on one leg, and of another colour on the other; short breeches, which did not reach to the middle of the thigh; a coat, one half white, the other half black or blue; a long beard; a silk hood, buttoned under the chin, and embroidered with figures of animals, dancing men, &c. Thus equipped, the *beaus* made their appearance at the tournaments, and other assemblies, where they met the *belles* of the day, attired in party-coloured tunics, one half of one colour, and the other of another.

Yours,

E.

POETRY.

—The memory of joys that are past, pleasant, yet mournful to the soul

OSSIAN.

FROM his mountains of snow, stormy Winter's descending,
And Autumn has sought more congenial shores :
To the storm bows the oak ; the tall pine-tree is bending ;
Down the mountain's side rushing the northern blast roars.

But the clouds that still gather, the storm that's still low'ring ;
The roaring of billows that mountainous roll ;
The blast of the North, down the mountain that's pouring,
Like the music of Carryl, are sweet to my soul.

The howl of the storm, on mine ear that still lingers,
Wakes the mem'ry of seasons of deepest delight ;
Not Æolian harp, touch'd by Zephyr's light fingers,
Sensations so mournful, so sweet, could excite.

To return ne'er again, have these moments departed,
O'er my dear native mountains, when careless I stray'd ;
When, wounded with sorrow, my bosom ne'er smarted,
When I laugh'd in the circle which Friendship had made.

Four months rugged Winter there fearless, reposes,
His servants, the Winds, roar terrific along.
But where friends hold "sweet converse," his terrors he loses,
The blast dies away in Festivity's song.

Joy pervaded our circle, while tempests were low'ring ;
Increas'd were our pleasures, when northern winds blew ;—
What emotions are rais'd, by the storm that's now roaring !—
Oh ! when my dear mountains again shall I view !

Dec. 1813.

PHICOL.

ON THE LATE GOV. TRUMBULL.

ARMS, nor the lyre, nor rostral voice were thine,
Yet, TRUMBULL, thee we trace, almost divine.
Thy mind, a friend to truth in every light,
Traced, undismayed, its path with candid sight,
Through hostile frowns and fearful damps of night.

Religion calm'd thy life, her hopes thy death,
Columbia's name hung on thy parting breath.
Let kings be rich, fame soothe the noble's ear,
Unblemish'd patriots ne'er shall want a tear.

EDGAR.

FRUITION AND HOPE.

FRUITION.

SISTER, although thy form be fair,
Say, can thy gifts with mine compare?
To Sorrow's sons, though thou art kind,
Canst thou like me delight mankind?
Like me, canst thou subdue the soul?
Do thousands bow to thy control?
Or, should we leave earth's busy host,
Whose absence would they miss the most?

HOPE.

Though disappointed much at thine,
I think they most would grieve for mine.

FRUITION.

Thine! thou deceiving, treacherous thing,
Whose every comfort has a sting;
Who dazlest to delude men's eyes,
Whose words are wind, whose tales are lies;
Who cheat'st the fop, the fair, the sage,
From morn to night, from youth to age;
Who to substantial good art dumb,
Whose joys are always joys to come;
Dost thou thyself with me compare?
Thou gay precursor of despair!

HOPE.

If judg'd by giving real bliss,
Yes, my offended sister, yes.

FRUITION.

By real bliss? To all that live
Is it not mine that boon to give?
Do I not dress the nuptial bower?
Do I not give the social hour?
Do I not Luxury's table spread,
And on the rich their blessings shed?
Do I not fill the sparkling bowl,
And wake to extacy the soul?
My gifts of weightier power must seem,
Mine are substantial—thine a dream.

HOPE.

Since little good on earth we gain,
And life is made a life of pain;
'Tis more, our talents to employ
In easing grief, than heightening joy.

When Cloe's frowns her swain depress,
And fill and fix him in distress;
I, whispering to the lover, say
She has not smil'd—but then she may.

When to complete the wretch's woe,
He hears the fair one answer—No;

I have suggestions still like this—
"A woman's No perhaps means—Yes."

When riches take them wings and fly,
And o'er their loss their owners sigh;
I tell them, while their bosoms burn,
What went so quick may quick return.

When statesmen lose (sad loss!) their power,
Displaced in a disgraceful hour;
Fear not, say I, the changeable tribe,
While papers lie, or cash can bribe.

When wives by cruel husbands rul'd,
Grow worse and worse, though often school'd;
I still am nigh, when anger pleads,
To tell them of a widow's weeds.

The maiden, forty summers old,
The grave, the timid and the bold,
The rich, the poor, obey my voice,
Believe my promise and rejoice.

Tell me, then, sister, if you please,
What portion characters like these
May bear, to all that mighty crowd,
Which at our feet has ever bow'd;
Would they not, if correctly view'd,
The mass of human minds include?
Go, sister, give the contest o'er,
Dispute my potency no more.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"The LASH," No. 1. is received: we have determined not to insert any part of a series, unless several numbers are in our possession. Those odes of Anacreon, translations of which have been communicated to us, are too common for our purpose. We shall decline the insertion of any translations of the common Latin and Greek authors: translations of the more rare ones, however, will be published with pleasure. We have received a number of other communications, which shall be considered.

Those persons in town, who by accident, have not had the subscription paper presented to them, are informed, that subscriptions may be made at the Post-Office, the Printing-Office, or by means of either of the managers.